

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A valve comprising:
a housing having an inlet and an outlet fluidly connected by a fluid flow path;
a valve element movable between a first position and a second position, wherein the valve element blocks fluid communication along the fluid flow path while in the first position;
a resilient member, fluidly sealed from the fluid flow path, for urging the valve element from its second position to its first position such that the valve element moves to its first position when the pressure of fluid entering the inlet is below a threshold amount.
2. A valve according to claim 1, wherein the valve element allows fluid communication along the fluid flow path while in the second position.
3. A valve according to claim 1, further comprising an apertured member disposed along the fluid flow path, wherein the fluid flow path includes an aperture in the apertured member.
4. A valve according to claim 3, wherein the valve element blocks the aperture in the apertured member while in the first position, thereby blocking fluid communication along the fluid flow path.
5. A valve according to claim 1, further comprising a chamber for housing the resilient member, wherein the chamber is fluidly sealed from the fluid flow path.
6. A valve according to claim 5, wherein the volume of the chamber varies as the valve element moves between the first position and the second position.
7. A valve according to claim 6, further comprising a vent for providing fluid communication between the chamber and the exterior of the valve.

8. A valve according to claim 1, further comprising a partition, wherein the housing is a cylindrical housing and the partition is a cylindrical partition disposed within the valve concentric with the housing.

9. A valve according to claim 8, wherein the valve element is an annular element disposed between the partition and the housing.

10. A valve according to claim 9, wherein the resilient element is disposed between the partition and the housing within a chamber defined by the partition, the housing, and the valve element.

11. A valve according to claim 10, further comprising an apertured member fixed to the partition, wherein the valve element is positioned between the apertured member and the housing while in the first position.

12. A valve comprising:
a housing having an inlet and an outlet;
an antechamber extending into the housing from the inlet;
an outflow path extending into the housing from the outlet;
a valve element moveable between a first position interrupting fluid communication between the antechamber and the outflow path and a second position allowing fluid communication between the antechamber and the outflow path;
a chamber fluidly sealed from the outflow path; and
a resilient member, disposed within the chamber, for urging the valve element to shift from its second position to its first position such that the valve element moves to its first position when the pressure of fluid in the antechamber is below a threshold amount.

13. A valve according to claim 12, wherein the chamber is fluidly sealed from the antechamber.

14. A valve according to claim 13, further comprising a partition disposed within the valve, wherein the chamber is a space between the partition, the housing, and the valve element.

15. A valve according to claim 14, wherein the volume of the chamber changes as the valve element moves.

16. A valve according to claim 12, further comprising an apertured member having an aperture for providing fluid communication between the antechamber and the outflow path.

17. A valve according to claim 12, further comprising a vent for providing fluid communication between the chamber and the exterior of the valve.

18. A valve according to claim 12, wherein the resilient member is a spring.

19. A valve comprising:
a housing, having an inlet and an outlet, extending in a longitudinal direction between the inlet and the outlet;
an antechamber in fluid communication with the inlet;
an outflow path in fluid communication with the outlet;
a valve element moveable in the longitudinal direction between a first position interrupting fluid communication between the antechamber and the outflow path and a second position allowing fluid communication between the antechamber and the outflow path; and
a resilient member for urging the valve element from its second position towards its first position such that the valve element moves to its first position when the pressure of fluid entering the inlet is below a preselected amount.

20. A valve according to claim 19, further comprising a chamber that is fluidly sealed from the antechamber and the outflow path, wherein the resilient member is disposed within the chamber.

21. A valve according to claim 20, wherein the chamber extends in the longitudinal direction, and wherein the length of the chamber in the longitudinal direction varies according to the position of the valve element.

22. A valve according to claim 21, wherein said length of the chamber in the longitudinal direction decreases as the valve element moves from the first position towards the second position.